

Q. Is my water meter still read each month?

A. Yes. We read your water meter to bill for the water consumption registered during that billing period.

Q. Why are only residential customers eligible for this program?

A. Residential accounts vary seasonally due to lawn sprinkling, the filling of swimming pools, and the number of people in the household. Historically, commercial and multi-family (apartment) accounts do not vary much seasonally. If they are sprinkling, they generally have separate meters so that their sewer rate is affected only by domestic, or inside, usage.

Q. Wouldn't it be more equitable to just meter my sewer?

A. No. It would be extremely costly to the City of Arlington as well as to its customers to meter sewer. Sewer meters are expensive to buy, expensive to maintain and not as accurate as water meters. Usually, metering sewer is reserved only for large commercial or industrial users, and those accounts are reviewed on an individual basis to determine if it is cost effective to do this special type of metering.

Q. Why was this program implemented?

A. It is an equitable system for billing sewer to residential customers. Each customer's water usage pattern is used to "customize" their sewer usage.



Q. How can this program help me save money?

A. Keep your water usage as low as you can during the winter months. Remember that watering your lawn or shrubs or filling a pool will affect your winter water usage and ultimately your maximum sewer charge for the year. If you suspect that you have a leak in a toilet or your sprinkler system, immediately inspect them and repair as necessary.

Summary

- This is an automatic yearly program; all residential customers are already "signed up"!
- We print a reminder message about this averaging program on your bills each year.
- The message will give you the approximate dates during which water consumption you use will be averaged to determine your maximum sewer charge.
- The highest month's consumption of the December through March billings will be discarded before the averaging is completed. If you wish to take advantage of the lower sewer charges, you should be conservative with your water usage during this time.
- Practicing conservation will also save you money year round.
- Call us at 817-275-5931 and we will be glad to assist you with this or any other questions you have about your maximum sewer charge or your account in general.

Residential Customers

Conserve water this winter to minimize your sewer charge



Frequently Asked Questions

Each year, residential monthly water consumption during the winter months is averaged to establish the maximum sewer charge that residents will have for the next 12 months. By conserving water during this period, you can control your sewer costs. Read more about this in the Q&A below.

Q: Why do you use the winter billing months for averaging?

A. Traditionally, the 4 lowest water consumption months for residential customers are billed in December, January, February and March. The primary reason for this is that residential customers are not watering their lawns, so their water usage is mainly inside the house. The majority of the water used is entering the sanitary sewer.

Q: Why do you average only 3 of the 4 winter months?

A. Lawn sprinkling, filling a swimming pool, or having a toilet leak can all increase a monthly bill. Being able to discard the largest of these bills prior to averaging the 3 remaining months gives a more representative measure of water flowing into the sewer system.

Q: How exactly do you average my winter months' usage?

A. We take the water consumption shown on your December, January, February and March billings, discard the highest month and average the remaining three months to establish the maximum sewer charge that will be used from April through the following March.

Average Winter Calculation Example:

Monthly Water Consumption

Oct to Nov = 7 thousand gallons

Nov to Dec = 24 thousand gallons

Dec to Jan = 4 thousand gallons

Jan to Feb = 8 thousand gallons

Calculate:

Discard the highest of the 4 months. Add the remaining months, 7 + 4 + 8 to get a total of 19. Divide the 19 by 3 to get 6.3, which rounds down to 6. The Average Winter Consumption (Sewer Maximum) for this residential account will be set at 6 thousand gallons for 1 year (April 2007-March 2008).

Q: Once I have my average, does this mean I will be charged this same amount for sewer every month?

A. The average winter usage is a maximum sewer volume charge. For example, if your average winter usage is 6,000 gallons and you use 15,000 gallons of water in a month, you will be billed for only 6,000 gallons of sewer in that month. But if you use 5,000 gallons of water in a month, you will be billed for 5,000 gallons of sewer in that month. For residential customers, sewer consumption will never be higher than water consumption.

Q: Once I have my average, will it ever change?

A. Your new average will be recalculated automatically each year when we average your December through March bills. It could go up, go down or stay the same from year to year. It depends on how much water you use during the winter months.

Q: How can I find out the approximate period during the winter months that will determine my maximum sewer charge?

A. Your location in the city determines approximately when your meter will be read each month. During the months of October through February, a message will display on the back of your bill, providing the approximate dates during which your water consumption determines the new average for the next year. It is during this period that being conservative in your water usage will minimize your sewer charge. Of course, practicing water conservation year round pays you even more dividends.

Q: What is my average if I am a new customer and do not have the winter months' history?

A. Each year, we average all residential customers' consumption to establish a city average. Every residential customer who does not have a full December, January, February and March billing will receive the city average until they have the history to establish their own. The current city average is 6,000 gallons.

Q: How can I conserve water to reduce my sewer bill?

A. Avoid over-watering your lawn. During the winter, a typical lawn requires only 1 to 1-1/2 inches of water every three weeks. Irrigate only to make up the difference if you don't receive this much precipitation. Install a rain/freeze sensor on your irrigation system controller to avoid wasting water. Indoors, fix leaks in faucets and toilet tanks, and wash clothes and dishes using full loads. To learn more about water conservation, go to www.SaveArlingtonWater.com.